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SUMMER GARDEN CHORES

A radio talk by Mr. W. R. Beattie, Extension Horticulturist, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered through Station WRC and 16 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, June 19, 1929.

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Mr. Marquis has just told you about the new plan for getting market information to farmers living in the southern part of the country. This type of information is of great help, especially to the grower of perishable fruits and vegetables, which must be marketed quickly after they are grown. I want to bring to your attention a number of points relative to the production of fruits and vegetables and the best methods of turning them to a profit. I am not forgetting, however, the farmers' most important market - his home table.

Captain John Smith, President of the Virginia Colony, once upon a time issued a decree that "He who will not work shall not eat." Things haven't changed much since Captain John Smith's time, and Captain Smith's edict still holds good, especially for those of us who live on farms.

If the farmers' table is not well supplied with the foods that may be produced on his own farm, it is his own fault. I realize that labor is scarce on many farms, especially at this time of the year when field crops demand so much attention. This, however, does not excuse the average farmer for not giving his garden and orchard proper attention. With the commercial fruit and vegetable grower, his problem is somewhat different, because fruits and vegetables are his major line of production. He has his problems - serious ones I will admit, and must work in cooperation with his fellow growers, if he is to succeed. He is a manufacturer of the products of the soil, most of which are extremely perishable and must be sold within a short time after they are grown.

Today, however, I am concerned not merely with the crops grown for sale, but with the things that are grown to use at home, the products of the orchard, the garden, the poultry flock, and the dairy. During former broadcasts, I have repeatedly urged that farmers give more attention to their farm gardens, and to having a greater variety, and a longer season for the use of fresh fruits and vegetables. I have urged that they plant a patch of asparagus, a bed of strawberries, a row or two of raspberries, a selection of standard fruits - such as are adapted to their localities - and that these be grown primarily for the use of the family.

Just at this time, southern gardeners should be thinking about planting crops such as carrots, beets, late potatoes, cabbage, collards, and broccoli, for use during the fall and early winter. Later, they should be planting lettuce, spinach, winter onions, kale, peas, and a number of other crops that will give them a supply of green vegetables for the winter and early spring.

In the North, there is still plenty of time for planting many of the garden crops which require a relatively short season for their maturity. There are beans, late tomatoes, carrots, beets, in many places late corn - at least a dozen garden vegetables that can still be grown to maturity before the end of the summer.

There is little profit in a garden that is growing weeds, on the other hand, there is great profit where the garden is made to produce plenty of fresh vegetables. We are now nearing the middle of the summer - day after tomorrow will be the longest day in the year. Harvest time with extra labor on the farm is at hand in many sections of the country, but with all of the work incident to the operating of a modern farm, there should be definite times during which attention may be given the farm garden and orchard.

Call it garden chores if you wish, but I dare say that the time spent on the garden and orchard will pay a larger dividend than a corresponding amount of time spent on field crops. Not only will the home garden and orchard pay dividends in cash value, but to a greater measure in promoting health and happiness of those who live on the farm.

Just the other day a man said to me, "I had fresh peas from my garden today, and I think they were the most delicious peas I ever ate." Don't you enjoy going to the dinner table and finding, in addition to the bread and meat, two or possibly three, delicious, well-cooked, fresh vegetables, making an appetizing, attractive meal, with plenty of vitamins - the kind of food that promotes health and builds strong bodies.

The old practice of leaving the gardening to the women folks of the household is obsolete, and the same methods of scientific production apply to the garden as to the growing of farm crops. The growing of vegetables for the home table is no longer drudgery, but can be handled by the most up-to-date and scientific methods.

It is true that we have more insects and diseases to deal with than formerly, but I have faith that our investigators will solve our problems as they appear, and while the vegetable growers, especially those who are growing for the market, must be on the alert, there is no reason to be discouraged over the prospect.

We are undergoing great changes in our fruit and vegetable industry, and as growers, we must adapt ourselves to these changed conditions. Specilization is the order of the day, and the market gardener or fruit grower who does not keep up with the procession, is going to be left behind. No grower can stand alone, we must work together for the common good of all. In order to succeed, the fruit and vegetable grower of the present day must standardize his products in accordance with market requirements. He must increase acre yields and thereby cut down unit production costs. The use of good tools and equipment is one way of cutting labor costs, and at the same time increasing yields. The real problem is to ascertain the trends and changes that are taking place in the fruit and vegetable industry and be governed accordingly. We must meet competition with a superior article, and in it all, give the customer full value, but first let us supply our own market - the home table.